

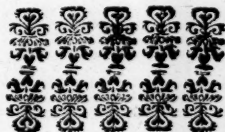
THE
Divine UNITY

Once more Asserted:

OR, SOME
CONSIDERATIONS

Tending to prove that God is but One
Single Being, and that the Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ is He.

In a Letter to a Friend.



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W. H. H. STARK

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The Divine UNITY once more asserted, &c.

Dear Friend,

FOrasmuch as after your reading the several Discourses I have sent you, tending to prove the Singleness of the Divine Being, you still remain, you say, in your first received Opinion a Trinitarian; I shall yet essay whether I my self cannot at length convince you, of that which to me is the most plain and apparent Truth, the Divine Unity; and which, in regard to the Glory of God, and Good of Men, I reckon my Duty to perswade. And although the many Treatises which have been writ by divers good and learned Men, seem to me such as that there need no more be said in this Controversy; yet I am in some hopes that I may offer something to your Consideration in a Method that may be yet more likely to clear your Judgment, when I know you are one of those who can read without condemning first, and have patience enough to look over, even what you don't like, and suspend your Judgment till you have read. I know you love the Truth, and none but such can be well discours'd with.

I shall therefore *First*, offer you some General Rules which must of necessity be used in judging not only in this, but in other Matters, if we resolve not to be deceived.

Secondly, I shall endeavour, according to those Rules, briefly to clear the Controversy between us.

And the *First* Rule I shall lay down is

this: That whatsoever is discours'd of any Matter, ought to be spoken in Words that are well understood. He that useth Words his Hearer understands not, is so far a Barbarian to him, and useles; and he that utters Words he himself understands not, makes himself so but as a Parrot. God has caused the admirable Contrivance of Speech, that by certain Sounds we communicate our Thoughts to one another: and as those Sounds have no natural Significations in themselves, their Betokenings are to be known and determin'd only by Use; so that that which a Word is most generally used to signify, is the most proper meaning of it. But when a Word is used for divers things, or we undertake to make, or alter Words, it is necessary to tell our meaning by them, that so we may have a certain Agreement in one another's Minds. There is no Language, I believe, spoken by any considerable part of Mankind, but is capable of expressing their Minds sufficiently; nor is our English behind any in aptness to speak the Minds of English Men, and I think they would do well (especially our Preachers, whose Discourses are, or ought to be of greatest Concern) to speak it more clean; and in so doing our Scholars, who are commonly fond of shewing their Learnings, would do it more than in larding their Discourses with Greek and Latin, and other Barbarisms, which if truly rendred into English, would be sometimes little better than Nonsense.

Secondly, When by an Agreement in the

use of Words, we as clearly as possible have made known our Thoughts to one another, then every Man must judg for himself. Though another Man say a thing is apparent to his Understanding, it is nothing to me till it is so to mine. If a thing be clear to me, I cannot but believe it; if it be not so, I have no good Cause to affirm it. I have no reason, nor is it always safe to assert, or deny a thing merely because another Man does so. But yet we daily see that it is the strongest Argument many Men have to be of this or that Belief, because those they esteem do believe so. It is a thousand to one but Children (for some time at least) will be of their Parents Opinion, if bred up by them, unless their Unkindness very much disgust them. The Opinion of the Learning and Piety of such and such Men, much prevails with those that sit under their Teachings, to take all they say upon trust: *Discenti credendum est*, that the Learner must believe, has been a Maxim many times abused. And some I have met with would by no Argument be brought to doubt of an Opinion because they thought it impossible, or inconsistent with the Goodness of God, that so many holy Men for so many Ages, who held it, should be deceived; not considering that Christ's Disciples themselves were sometimes under Mistakes. But we, if we will act like wise Men, must try all things, and hold fast that we find right; we must try Doctrines by all proper Methods, and not trust too much to the Words of Men, for all Men are fallible (Christ only excepted) and sometimes deceived. Tho the good Opinion I ought to have of Men, engages me not presently to condemn them as Liars, though they affirm things I think unlikely; yet the Conscience of good will to my self I find in me, that I can never desire to be deceived, obliges me not to give my own Judgment the lie, for the Authority of any Man. For as none is Lord of our Consciences but God, so none is rightful Master of our Understandings, but he who cannot deceive.

No created Authority otherwise than by convincing Arguments can rightly demand our Belief. The vast Time some Men have spent in searching out the Opinions of former Ages, is very little to the purpose in relation to the Proof of Truth it self; for the Question is, whether this or that Doctrine be true. It is very weakly said, it is, because such a one said so, or it was the Opinion of such an Age, tho we had a certain Account of it, and it were within the three first Centuries. The Antiquity of an Opinion signifies nothing, as to the truth of it: if it did, we are most properly the Antients, and our Time the Age of the World. Your or my affirming a thing, is as good Authority as any, unless that of those you can prove not only inspired, but inspir'd in the very Assertions you bring their Authority to prove.

Thirdly, We must not be too hasty, or easy to conclude a thing; but according as we find it more or less apparent, we must take more or less time and pains in examining it, supposing it a Matter we are concern'd in. And if it be that in which it is dangerous to be deceived, we cannot wisely receive it, till we have made it out so plain, that we can find no cause to doubt of it. We have all from Childhood took up many Opinions of things as Truths, without Consideration, which we call Prejudices, or things believed before Judgment; which if we will be wise, we must doubt all over again, and examine till we either find cause to reject them, or having try'd them to the uttermost, they remain to us unquestionable, and truly the Objects of our Understanding. Truth only can be the Object of the Understanding; for a Man cannot know that which is not, or a thing to be otherwise than it is: he may suppose a thing to be other than it is, but he cannot know it to be so; to say he may, is a Contradiction.

Now there are but three Ways whereby the Knowledge of things can possibly come into our Minds.

First, By Sense.

Secondly, By Reason.

Thirdly, By Revelation.

First, By Sense. I do not mean only, those Perceptions we have of Bodies, by means of our Bodily Organs; but those also, or rather and especially which we have in our Minds of mental things, without arguing, or reasoning; a kind of Passive Knowledge, which we don't so properly get as receive, which so soon as the Object is presented, or the Thought comes into our Mind, is self-evident, which we may call our *notion* *notions*, or common Notions, of which we can neither doubt nor give a Reason, unless that God has made things so and so, and wills we should apprehend, or think of them as they are. As for instance, that we are, and think so and so, are pleas'd, or displeas'd; Two and one is Three; The Whole is more than a Part; Contradictions cannot be true, as a thing cannot be, and not be at the same time; Black and White are not the same. He that should go to dispute or reason of the Truth of these, would shew himself unfit for Dispute, or void of Reason.

Secondly, We have a Faculty of considering, discoursing, reasoning, reflecting, or arguing from these first Notions, and thence deducing and concluding things at first less evident. This we call Reason, or Reasoning, a Faculty, or Power of increasing our Knowledge by industry, whereby if we rightly proceed we may come to an absolute Certainty in many things at first less apparent. As for Example; I am certain by Sense or Experience, that I desire, and that I cannot always satisfy or fulfil my Desire, but am insufficient. This is the first, and self-evident Knowledge. Then I come to reason, or argue;

If I am not sufficient for my self, cannot always please my self, want some good, and must be beholden to something else, or can't be happy, I am not self-existent: for

that which wants something it cannot give it self, might have wanted more and more, Being and all; and that which may have an Addition to its Being, and cannot give it, could less be of it self, or its own Cause. But I find I am, therefore I must have another my Cause, and this Cause is God.

Thirdly, To the Knowledge Man receives, and gets by these two ways, God has added a more special Help, express Revelation, immediately causing some Men to know some things, and declare them to others, which they would either not at all, or not so easily have come to the knowledge of, without such a particular Instruction. As what God will do, or Man shall be, for the future; what is God's special Will to Man in some particular Circumstances, &c. which notices of his Mind and Will God gave at sundry times, and in divers manners to the Prophets of old, but most fully and clearly in later times by Christ and his Apostles; the Account whereof, which we have in writing, is that which we call the Holy Scripture.

By one or other of these three Lights, or two, or all conjoin'd, we must of necessity come to the Knowledge of all we are capable of knowing, and by them rightly used the Controversy betwixt us must needs be decided. And that we may the sooner come to a Satisfaction therein, let us take along with us these two or three Considerations.

First, That these Lights must not be oppos'd to one another. Our Sensations are given us as a Ground to work upon, and our Reason as means to assist and compleat the Knowledge we receive by Sensation. And Revelation can be received but by means of the two former. We cannot without the greatest Folly suppose a thing can be revealed to us contrary to our Sense or Reason: for example, God cannot be supposed to tell us that White is Black; or that a Part is as great as the Whole; that Two and One is not Three; or that he that can do all things cannot raise a dead Man; that a Debt that is freely

freely forgiven, is fully paid, &c. But God has given us several degrees of Revelation in Scripture ; some things are so clearly express'd that we can have no doubt about them, when once we hear the words ; other things are reveal'd but in part, or in such words that we must use our Reason in finding out the Sense of them, till which is found, it is properly no Revelation to us. Whatsoever is given us as a Revelation must either be evident presently, or be proved by Reason or Arguments to be such, before we can well receive it as a Revelation. We have no Cause or Pretence to believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, but that we can give Reasons why we do so, or that this or that is the meaning of a Text of Scripture, if it be contrary to our clear Notions. If we have no Rule to judge what is Scripture, or what is the Sense of what is believed to be so, it will be indifferent what we believe or disbelieve about it : And whatever we judge or receive, must be according to our selves, or the Capacities of our Beings. I know those that hold the Doctrine of a Trinity in God, or Transubstantiation, or such-like unreasonable Opinions, cry out mightily against Reason, and tell us, and persuade whom they can, that the Unitarians exalt Reason too much, Human Reason, Corrupt Reason, Carnal Reason, and set it above Faith, to which it ought to yield. Let us consider the Matter. They themselves cannot deny but that they use their Reason at other times in proving the Scripture to be of Divine Authority, and in finding and giving the Sense of it : why should they exclaim against us for using the same Faculty in understanding those Scriptures controverted betwixt us ? Why is it ? If we may be allowed at all to say why, I know not, unless they are resolv'd to believe some things they have found no good Cause so to do, or rather would have others believe things without Consideration, which make for their Interest. But why may we not consider, or reason with our selves ? (to demand a better Cause) Is considering the

agreement of Opinions not to be used ? Is this Carnal Reason to be condemn'd ? No certainly. An implicate puzzled Faith is rather Carnal Reason. Let us consider what the Carnal Reason, or *φρόνημα σαρκός*, Wisdom of the Flesh condemn'd in Scripture is ; it is said to be Enmity against God, and not subject to his Law, and to be Death. But the Reason we would have Men use, tells us, That God is our Author, Sovereign, and greatest Benefactor ; therefore we are bound to love him with our highest Love, that we can live, move, and be, only by his Power, and be happy but in his Favour, and in loving him ; that if we hate and disobey him, we turn from the Life or Bliss of our Souls. The Wisdom or Reason of the Flesh, sinful Reason, can be thought to be nothing, but our inordinate Inclination to, and too much following after the Satisfaction of those Appetites we have by occasion of the Body, the disorderly satisfying of our Senses, the Lust of the Flesh, and Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, which the Reason, or Consideration we plead for, tells us is not best for us, and on that account displeasing to God, who wills us nothing but what tends to our Happiness. As for example, The Reason of the Flesh persuades the Drunkard inordinately to seek strong Drink : The Reason of the Spirit or Mind tells him, when he will let it speak, that it is hurtful to him, and injurious to others. The Carnal Reason of the Whore-monger persuades him to follow unclean or strange Women ; the Reason of the Spirit tells him it is unjust, and may prove his Destruction. The corrupt Reason of the covetous Man bids him keep his own, *take care* for himself ; when the Reason of the Mind, or right reasoning tells him he *has to spare*, and his poor Brother's Condition requires his Assistance. Carnal Reason tells a Trinitarian Preacher, if he should turn Unitarian, and not dissemble it, he will go near to lose his Stipend, and Esteem with the Multitude : what the Reason of the Spirit will tell him, he may

may find by due Attention.

But that any should cry down the use of their Reason I see no greater Cause, than that their Wills are inclinable to something or other, which their Understandings are ready to disprove, and that they have a mind to have their Wills upon others, they would persuade to that Intent out of their Reasons. Carnal, corrupt, sinful Reason we disclaim as much as any; but the Faculty of Reasoning, or discoursing with our selves or others, the Consideration of Causes and Evidences, comparing of Ideas, is no way against the Faith of a Christian. No, Faith comes by hearing, *Rom. 10. 17.* not the hearing of the outward Ear only, but of the Mind or Understanding. We read of the hearing or Obedience of Faith, but there must be a Conviction that what we hear is true, in order to our believing and obeying it. The Bereans were said to be more noble for considering what they heard, and proving it to be true 'ere they believed it, *Acts 17. 11.* though *Paul* himself preached to them. Faith is said to be the Evidence of things not seen, *Heb. 11. 1.* The Word *Ελεγχος* signifies an Argumentation, or Proof by Argument. Had there been no need of Argument to persuade the Faith of some things even Christ and his Disciples taught, Miracles had been useless; but the Consideration of those miraculous Works, apparently above the Power of Creatures to perform, was a rational Argument to persuade that those Doctrines God owned by his going out of his common way in Nature by such extraordinary Signs, must needs be true, it being impossible that God should concur to persuade a Lie. We are exhorted to be ready to give a Reason of the Hope that is in us; and we can never understand any Scripture in a Sense contrary to Reason: and though we think we are bound to believe that whatsoever God saith is true, albeit we don't understand it, yet we can never believe the Truths God is supposed to tell us, till we know what they are, nor well believe God

saith a thing till it appear likely to be true. And whatever is supposed to be above, or too great for our Understanding, cannot be supposed to be revealed; that were a Contradiction: and that some think they sufficiently solve the Matter by saying that the *Quod* is revealed, though not the *Quomodo*, that the thing is, tho not how it is, won't do in the Instances they bring it for: as for example, they say it is revealed, that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one Being, tho it is not revealed how they can be so; or, that God and Man makes but one Person, tho not how it can be. I answer, that not only how these things can be, but that they are or can be so, is alike unintelligible and incomprehensible, and consequently can be no Revelation, any more than the *how*: but as for God's Eternity, tho the *how* is supposed above our Understanding, yet that God is eternal, yea must needs be so, is not only reveal'd, and so intelligible, but apparent as well as his Sufficiency, or any other Attribute, by Reason without Revelation. Of which,

Secondly, We have this as a Rule, That we must never take any Text of Scripture in such a Sense as is contrary to another Text, for Contradictions cannot be true; this would be to destroy the Authority of Scripture. It is known to all that read the Bible, that there are seeming Contradictions in it, but they must be reconciled as much as possible: But nothing is more common with Men than to oppose Text to Text, and from difficult and dark Places to prove (as they think) what they please: There are many Places hard to be understood, as all know; and *Peter* testifies to be in the Epistles of *Paul*, *2 Pet. 3. 16.* but we must not conclude any thing from an obscure Place against a clear one, no nor from a few Texts against many, much less from a few dark ones against many clear ones: no, we must, if we will act like wise Men, believe the most and clearest Testimonies, and suspend our Judgment as to the others, till we can understand them so as to reconcile them.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, We must never understand any Text of Scripture in a Sense contrary to the general Scope and Design of Scripture, which being apparently good, and suitable to the Condition of Mankind, and becoming God, is the greatest Argument for its Divine Authority: so that no Text must be interpreted, or Doctrine taught thence, so as that therefrom can be deduced apparently, or in real Consequence, an evil Inference. This Trial of Truth by the Tendency of the Doctrine I have long thought most considerable, tho sometimes there may be some Difficulty in making genuine or natural Inferences: but the Design of Scripture readily appears to be to bring Men from Sin by Repentance to God, and their Duty to him; and no Doctrine that tends to hinder this, is likely to be true.

I think it is not so necessary to mind you of the Advantage of having Recourse to the Original Tongues for the more exact Knowledge of Scripture; and in so doing that we must rather consult how the Words were commonly used in the Times and Places of the Writing of the several Books, than trust to Expositors, who generally are of some Party, and commonly endeavour rather to bring the Words to Senses favouring their prejudicate Opinions, than to bring their Opinions to the apparent Sense of Scripture. I need not mention to you the different Readings and Diversity of Copies, or the Faults of Copiers and Translators, in giving too much or too little, in joining what ought to be separated, and separating what ought to be join'd, or rendering Words false. I shall say nothing of what may be taken for divinely inspired, and what cannot. I think we have Scripture plain enough even in English, if reasonably used, to decide the Controversy between us.

To which I now come, and shall state the Question as plainly as I can. Thus:

1. Whether God is but One single Person or Being, call'd the Father.
2. Or whether the Godhead does not consist of three, (Persons, or what else you please

to call them) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Before I give you the Arguments that determine my Answer to these Questions, I desire you to reflect and consider, that as the Affirmative of the second Question is yet your Opinion, so it is the Opinion you received from your Childhood, and imbib'd into as firm a Belief as you now have of it, before you were capable of Judging, or at least did set your self to consider it. And that this is no good Ground for the continuing in the Belief of an Opinion; nay for this Cause you ought to suspect it, and examine it. So I would desire you now, we come to the Trial of the Matter, that (for this time at least) you will suppose your self possibly in an Error herein, and venture a fair Trial, or else you will be incapable of any Argument. You need not fear, Truth never loses by coming to the Test.

I suppose we are so far agreed in what we mean by God, as that we on both sides take him to be a Being that is self-sufficient, or of himself necessary, and all-perfect. And the Scripture tells us he is Light and Love, that is, Understanding and Will, perfect Understanding, and absolute good Will. Some have called him *ὁ πρῶτος*, the Mind or Spirit, viz. the chief Mind, the self-sufficient Mind, who knows and loves himself only necessarily, or else he were not self-sufficient; but as he is all-wise, and all-powerful, he of his free Pleasure excites in himself the Thoughts of Images, or Representations of himself, and causes them actually to be, viz. his Creatures.

The word *Trinity* we need say nothing to, (we are agreed it signifies a Threefoldness) and that it is not found in Scripture, or necessary, any more than the word *Person*, which we find not there relating to this Matter. Nor is it now used in the Sense it was formerly by the Latins for one that acts a part in a Play, or so applicable to God; but by it is commonly understood some individual intelligent Being, a Self, or one by it self, separate and distinct from all others.

That

That which can say, *I*, or *Me*, in distinction from all other Selves or I's : So that two Persons are not the self-same, but two distinct Beings, as two Men, two Angels, two Minds, one is not the other, or can be the same. One Mind is one Person, and cannot be more, for there are no distinct and separate Beings in it ; if there were, they would be so many distinct and separate Minds, or Persons. But the Body is not of it self call'd a Person, it may be divided, and become Parts of other Bodies, and every Body is a part of the whole bodily World. The Body and Mind are not two Persons, nor does the Body and Mind properly make a Man a Person, for the Body is but a thing the Mind uses. Nor does a Mind cease to be a Person, tho unbodied, as God is, and Angels are thought to be ; the Mind may be without the Body, and be consider'd without considering the Body, and consider it self and say, *I*, *Me*, but the Body can't do so. When there are said to be two or three Persons, the common Sense and Meaning (and that is that we ought to take it in) is that there are two or three intelligent Beings, distinct by themselves, as *Peter*, *James*, and *John*. By a Created Person is always understood, an imperfect dependent intelligent Being. By a Divine Person can be meant properly nothing but the self-sufficient Mind, or God.

Now to say that God, the self-sufficient Mind, is three Persons, is not good Sense ; but to say there are three Divine Persons, the Sense is all one as to say there are three Divine Beings, three Divine Minds, three Self-sufficients, which is the same as to say there are three Gods. But to say yet there is but one God, is but to unsay or contradict what was said before. Either there is but one God, or there are more ; both cannot be true : but more Persons are more distinct Beings, and consequently if they are Divine Persons, are more Gods ; but more Gods cannot be if we suppose God self-sufficient, for whatever is self-sufficient, can have nothing else said to be necessary ; and what is not necessary is not God. And that some

say, tho three created Persons, as a Father, his Son, and one that is neither of them, cannot be one Being, yet perhaps three Divine Persons, a Divine Father, a Divine Son, and a Divine Spirit that is neither Father nor Son, may be all one Being, is very foolish, and all one as to say, Absurdities, or what seems untrue, or at least what we don't know, cannot be affirmed of Creatures, but yet may of the Creator. Why I pray ? may we venture to speak what we don't apprehend of God, rather than of Men, or run the hazard of belying God, rather than his Creatures ? He that asserts what he don't understand in any Matter, seems not much afraid of being a Liar ; and if he affirms any such thing of God, he becomes so too bold for a sober Man. I wonder how any dare affirm any thing of God, which they confess they cannot conceive how it can be true. I would wish them to keep in mind that there can be no Revelation of that which is inconceivable ; God may indeed tell us there is something inconceivable in his Being, and we have Reason to believe him, for our Reason it self tells us so, but we cannot say what it is while we suppose it inconceivable.

Again ; if you will quit the word *Person*, or have it in an uncommon or improper Sense, (and that is to leave us in Confusion and Uncertainty of your Meaning) if you will only say God is three or threefold, it is alike untrue. For the Notion of God is such as agreeth only to one single Mind, or intelligent Being, and one is different from three, Singleness from Threefoldness. I wonder how Men can sometimes talk of God's being the most simple or single Being, and the most high, &c. and then contradict themselves, and say, tho he is single, yet he is not so, but threefold. And again, tho he is three or threefold, yet he is but one, and single ; or tho the Father is most high, greater than all, yet he hath one equal with him. Where two things are equal, neither can in any respect be said to be the greater ; to affirm so were the height of Contradiction.

B

Again ;

Again; if God be a Spirit, or Mind, and he hath made Man in his Image, let us descend into our own Mind, and see if we can find a Trinity in Man; surely we may have Experience of what is in us, a Man knows the things of a Man. If God be a Trinity, and Man his Image, Man must be an Image of that Trinity. If Man be an Image of God, he is so as to his Mind; for God is not a Body, nor has a Body as a Constituent of his Being, because Body is imperfect, and God has no Imperfection. And tho Bodies are in the remotest Sense Images of God, because they are, and are not of themselves, therefore the Consideration of them points out to us God their Author, yet Man's Body is not an Image of any thing different in God, or a Person, or coequal to the Mind, but quite of another nature, more ignoble and base. So then we will consider the Mind for the finding out of this Image, where we may indeed find several Modes of Thinking, as direct thinking on a Thing, Reflection on our own Thoughts, and the Acts of our Will about what we think on; or in fewer Words, Understanding, Conscience and Will, which some make a Trinity of, but have not well consider'd the Matter; for Understanding and Conscience differ not, but in respect of the Object, knowing ones own Thoughts being Understanding as much as knowing any thing else: so that in a Mind there is precisely but a Duality, or Twofoldness, Understanding and Will, which will not do the Business for three; and as these are not so much as two Persons, much less can they be call'd a Father, and a Son, or either of them the Product of the other, rather than the other of it; and least of all can there be found a third that is neither Father, nor Son, but something else, and (for Contradiction sake) yet the same. No, these and what other Faculties we find in our Minds are essentially one Person or Mind, the one thing Cogitation; nor are they Relations, *Relationes sunt diversorum*, as 'tis said, Relations are of divers things, not of one: and God we must confess is more one than this

our Mind; our Thoughts are some now, some anon, sometimes applied to this Object, sometimes to that, not all together; sometimes we consider a thing without reflecting, sometimes will we scarce know what. But God has none of these Imperfections, he has no Dissensions from himself; he does not forget himself when he thinks on other things, nor other things when he thinks on himself, but is perfect, and mere Cogitation.

Besides, if the Understanding, Conscience, and Will in God, (if they were three be the Trinity, (as one, the most considerable Trinitarian, would have) these are in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, or else he could not be a perfect Mind, a Person, or Self, who is every where in Scripture spoken of, and apprehended as such, having all these attributed to him as distinct from the Son: so that neither Christ nor the Holy Ghost can be either of these, but have each their distinct Understandings, Consciences, and Wills of their own, as the Scripture every where represents them. Now if the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be a Person, as he is in Scripture always represented, and I know no body dares deny; and if he be a Divine Person, or God, as all acknowledg, there can be no other Divine Person, or God, besides him. Whatever Person is God, is the only God; for one Absolute, All-perfect, most High, excludes any other absolute, all-perfect, most high. The Father of Christ is an absolute, all-perfect, most high Being, or else he is not God at all; but he is so, therefore he is the only God, 1 Cor. 8. John 17. 3. Neither Christ nor the Holy Ghost are any where said to be the only God, or most High, but are apprehended in our Minds, as represented in Scripture, as real Persons, distinct from the Father, and from one another. Christ is the Son of the Father: Nothing can be the Father or Son, much less Father and Son, of it self: He saith to the Father, *Not my Will, but thine be done*; which proves two Wills. The Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the

the Son, he is said to speak nothing of himself but what he heareth. If the Father be God, and the Son and Holy Ghost are others, not the self-same as the Father, the Father is the only God, therefore the Son and Holy Ghost are not God. Those who have endeavoured to persuade a Trinity in God by Comparisons in bodily Nature, have been very inconsiderate, doing no better than to determine what God is, by comparing him to that which is most unlike him. Nor is their Length, Breadth, and Thickness; Sun, Light, and Heat; Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, that whereby we may illustrate what is in any Minds, much less in the chief one.

Again; tho there could be suppos'd precisely a Threeness in God, as three Modes, three Names, three Attributes, yet the Matter would be spoil'd in the Application: for Sonship, to be begotten, to be anointed, to be sent of God or Christ, to proceed from God or Christ, can be neither Persons, Names, Attributes, Modes or Relations of and in God's Being, but are things that can be said only of Creatures, because they imply some Imperfections, as Inferiority, Production or Subjection; but such things are said of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, therefore they are not God. Nor can God have any Relation to Creatures necessarily and essentially, because Creatures are not necessary Beings.

Nor can that be call'd a Generation or Origination, which never began to be generated or originated. That which never began to be doing was never done, or finished; so that Eternal Generation will remain to be eternal Nonsense, or a Contradiction, as much as Eternal Creation, which some inconsiderately talk. But Nonsense and Absurdities these Men seem to love, who persuade themselves that what God begets or produces, must be essentially the same, or such as himself; or that the Divine Nature can be that which is common to more than one, and such like stuff. Let them consider: To say God can beget any thing as great as

himself, (were there any Colour in Scripture for such a Notion) would not be to affirm any Perfection of him, but an Imperfection: for whatever God does, he does either necessarily, or not necessarily; if he necessarily produce or beget any other thing, he himself is not sufficient, because it is supposed there must needs be another, and consequently he is not God. If he beget or produce any thing that is not necessary, that is not God, and so cannot be as great, or equal with him. Besides, if it were essential in God to beget; he must do it infinitely, and so beget more Gods for ever. Tho Creatures can beget their Equals, it is far from being a Note of the greater Perfection. Nor is it by their own Power they beget, but by virtue of the Word of God; and tho they beget their Equals, yet the Begotten is not the self-same that begets, but numerically and personally, or separately another. It is no Absurdity to suppose more Creatures than one, because none of them have more than partial Reality, none of them are absolute or self-sufficient. The Divine Nature cannot be common to more than one, because it is always superlative, most high, greatest, &c. and so is the most proper, special, singular, and distinct Being, having nothing common with any Second, but Being only.

Nor can God be call'd a Father in relation to any thing he produces or begets, essentially or eternally in himself, either Person, Relation, Mode, or what you will suppose; but Fatherhood is an arbitrary Attribute; as he pleaseth to be a Creator of his free Will, so he is a Father only to his Creatures as he produces them, as also in regard to his good Will, to them that are capable of Happiness. He is the Father of Christ, especially because he produced him in a peculiar manner different from all other Creatures, neither by immediate Creation, as *Adam*, nor by common Generation, as all other Men, but in an extraordinary way on a Virgin, *Luke* 1. 24, 25. *Ista* 7. 14. and because he loves him more than the rest, *Mat.* 3. 14. *Mark* 1. 11. *Luke* 3. 22. *Mat.* 17. 5. *Mark*

Mark 9. 7. Luke 9. 35. Adam was called *the Son of God* in a nearer Sense than any his sinful Offspring, who came mediately by him, *Luke 3. 38.* God is call'd *the Father of Spirits* in a nearer Sense than of Bodies: *The Father of Believers*, as they are adopted, and morally regenerated. In short, he is the Father of all his Creatures, but of some in nearer Sense than others.

Again; the Union of any created Being with God, as of the Man Christ with God his Father, cannot be an essential or personal Union. For the Creature cannot possibly be, or become God, or the self-same with him, and uncreated. God, the Self-sufficient Being, subsists by himself without the Creature, the Creature is not necessary to him; and what is not necessary cannot be essential to, or of the Person, or Self of, God. Finite and Infinite cannot be one and the same; to suppose so is the Height of Absurdity. Whatsoever constitutes a Person, is that without which the Person cannot be, but God can be without the Creature; therefore there can be no personal Union between them. Nor will whatever Union can possibly be between Finite and Infinite, make it that the Finite can be so much as called God in the same Sense as the Infinite is. And whatsoever is a Creature in any Sense, and so imperfect, or finite, cannot be said to be uncreated, perfect, or infinite, as it is God, because it is not God, being first supposed to be a Creature. Nor can that which is God be said to be ignorant, impotent, or any way defective, as it is Man, for God is not Man at all. To say Christ was ignorant of any thing, suffer'd, or received from another, as he was Man, but was all-knowing, impassible, and self-sufficient, as he was God, is all one as to say the Creature, as it is God, is Omniscient, Almighty, &c. and God as he is a Creature is ignorant, impotent, &c. which is the greatest Contradiction. If he be first affirm'd to be God, that Affirmation denies him to be Man, for God is not a Creature; and if he be first affirm'd to be Man, he is thereby deny'd to be God,

for the Creature is not God. To affirm a thing to be so and so, and then to affirm it to be infinitely otherwise, is as bad Sense as to affirm a thing to be, and not be, at the same time. If Man's Union with God makes him God, God's Union with Man must likewise make him Man. But I think they do say so who say God was made Flesh, was here and there, and seen among Men; such People commonly have but gross bodily Notions of God, and do not conceive of him as an all-sufficient, self-sufficient Mind, who is in no place nor thing essentially, but in himself; and he himself is not extended, or Extention, or Room, but pure Mind. The Union between Christ and God his Father is of Will, Consent, Love, &c. Whatsoever God wills and makes known to Christ, Christ wills the same. Whatsoever God does or makes known in Christ, Christ suffers and knows. And such a Union as he has with the Father, he prays the Father the Saints may have with them both, *viz.* the forefaid Agreement, *John 17. 11, 21.* The Union of Bodies can be but the mingling of their Particles, so as they may lie near together. The Union of a Body and Mind can be no such Nearness, but only a Union of Use and Concern; the Mind uses the Body, and is concern'd at its being so and so. The Union of two Minds can be nothing but thinking the same Thoughts, or being conscious of one another's Thoughts: but a created or imperfect Mind cannot possibly be conscious of all the Thoughts of the self-sufficient, or all-perfect Mind, or think at all after the same manner; if it could, it were not imperfect or dependent: the Creature can think but in its bounded measure, some of the same Thoughts God thinks, and not them in the same manner. However, if two Minds could think exactly the same Thoughts, that would not make them personally one, any more than two Bodies being of the same Figure would make them the same numerically.

Now as there can be nothing which is neither God nor Creature, so there can be

nothing which is both created and uncreated. And those People who think they effectually resolve all Difficulties in the Matter in dispute, by saying Christ was so and so as he was God, and so and so as he was Man, never consider that they beg the Question, and speak as foolishly as if one should say, *Peter*, as he was *Peter*, denied his Master, but *Peter* as he was *John* did not deny his Master; or as if one should say, a Lie, as it is Truth, is to be believed and affirmed, but a Lie as it is a Lie is to be denied or disbelieved; or as if one should say, a Trinitarian, as a Man, is under a Mistake, but as he is something else is infallible.

Now if we can find no Notion implanted by God in our Minds conformable or reconcilable to the Doctrine of the Trinity, viz. that God most High is more than one Being or Person, or that one Being or Person can be both Father and Son, Creator and Creature, or other than the Father of all things, or the Father of Christ, or that God Almighty can beget any thing equal with, or as great as himself, we may well conclude the Doctrine of the Trinity is a groundless Opinion. And that our Understanding is such as is capable of knowing whatever is needful for us to know of God, if we will not believe our inward or Spiritual Sense, and our Reason, the Apostle *Paul* tells us the same, *Rom. 1. 19, 20, 21.* That what may be known of God is manifest in Men, for God hath shewed it to them; and the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead. Could the Godhead (yea the Attribute of Eternity, which some urge as one unintelligible Point of Faith to pervert the Belief of another, viz. that Two and One are but One) be known even to Men who glorified him not? And will you say that those that love and fear him, can't find enough, either in him or in his Works, to convince them, what he is, and whether he be one, or whether he is not alone, but has others such as himself,

even without express Revelation? Which we have also as a Rule, if duly used, sufficient (as most Protestants acknowledge) to inform our Understanding, and determine our Faith in all things necessary to Salvation, beyond all Fear of being mistaken in this, or other Matters. Concerning which Rule I shall, first, remind you, that if nothing can be said to be reveal'd to us which we can't understand or know, and to say so is the same as to say we can be made know what we cannot be able to know; Secondly, that if that which is true in Reason, cannot be false by Scripture, and we have no Cause to take any Passage in Scripture in a Sense contrary to, or beside those Notions God has given us; Thirdly, if we must not make one Text speak contrary, or inconsistent with the rest, but if there are Places obscure and doubtful, we must rather remain undetermined about them, than deny the plain Ones, and rather ground our Faith on the many Texts, and whole current of Scripture, than on a few opposed to them; then I say,

Where the Scripture saith, Christ and his Father are one, we cannot understand it of Oneness of Being, or Nature, or Number; because the Scripture always represents Christ and his Father to us, as Persons, or Beings really, and apparently, and numerically distinct, as any of his Apostles were from him, or from one another, not the self-same, but two Selves; and such a Distinction cannot consist with the Notion of Oneness of Being, Person, or Number. God we are often told is but one, and the Father is said to be that one; *John 17. 3. Mar. 12. 29, 32. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Jud. 25. Mal. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 8. 4, 5. 1 Tim. 2. 5. Exod. 8. 10. 1 Kings 8. 23. 2 Chron. 6. 14. Deut. 6. 4. 2 Kings 19. 15. Eph. 4. 6. Jam. 2. 19. Neh. 9. 6. Psal. 86. 10. Isa. 44. 6, 8, and 45. 5, 22. 1 Cor. 15. 28. Job. 10. 29. 2 Cor. 1. 3, and 11. 31. Jam. 1. 17.* But the Unity of Father and Son must be such as is consistent with Duality in Number, Nature and Person, as is Oneness of Will, Design, Consent, *John 17. 11, 22, 23.* Where the
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Scripture saith there are three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one; we cannot take this Union to be of Being, Person, Nature or Number, any more than that of the three on Earth (one of which is one of these) because there are so many things said of them inconsistent with that Opinion, representing them distinct; but that Oneness is of Testimony or Agreement in the thing witnessed, as appears by the Scope and Context, and which Notion of Oneness agrees with other Scriptures: if it were Oneness of Being, or Number, they could not be truly said to be three Witnesses, or *μαρτυρες*.

Again; where the Scripture calls Christ God, or attributes any thing belonging to God to him, we must not take it in the same Sense as the Father is called God, or that any thing of God is attributed to him any further than may be to a Creature; because the Father is said to be greater than all, *John* 10. 29. greater than Christ, *John* 14. 28. to be the only true God, and the one God, *John* 17. 3. *Deut.* 6. 4. *1 Cor.* 8. 4, 6. *Eph.* 4. 6. *1 Tim.* 2. 5. And Christ is said to do nothing of himself, and that the Father doeth the Works; he prayeth to the Father to do this and that: which makes it impossible he can be thought to be God, as the Father is God; the lesser, Dependent, &c. cannot be as the greater, the Independent, &c. And where Christ is called God with the greatest *Elogium*, as *Hab.* 1. 8. he is said to have a God, who had anointed him with the Oil of Gladness, and to have Fellows, of which Fellows the Father could be none, because Christ is said to have Joy above them. God most high cannot be said to have a God, be anointed, have any greater, or Fellows with him.

Where the Word is said to be God, supposing it spoken of Christ (which yet is a Question) it cannot be taken that he is God in the same Sense as he with whom he is said to be; for here are supposed two, and both cannot be most High, nor can

the one most high God be properly said to be with God at such a Time To say God that was with God, was the same he was with, would make the Text Nonsense; God can't be properly said to be with himself. But if by the Word *Λογος* we understand Reason, as the Greeks do, that is Wisdom or Understanding, we may understand it, as that in the eighth and ninth of *Proverbs*, for a Rhetorical Description, or Discourse of the Wisdom of God, how he began, and made all things in Wisdom; Wisdom was with God, that is, he had Wisdom, or was Wisdom, or wise: and where the *Λογος* is said to be made Flesh, or be Flesh, we cannot suppose that God became a Man, but, as the following Words explain it, did tabernacle, or dwell in a Man, one of our Kind, and so among us, according to *Col.* 2. 9. *In him the Fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily*, that is, the Father abode with, and acted upon Soul and Body in a special manner: for God's dwelling with, or presence with any thing, is but his continuing special Operation upon it. But wherever Christ is called a God, we may well take it in such a Sense, as he himself gives us in his Answer to the Jews when they went to stone him for saying he was the Son of God, *John* 10. 35, 36. *If those are called Gods, saith he, to whom the Word of God came* (*Psal.* 82. 6.) *say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not my Father's Business, believe me not. Did the doing his Father's Business he sent him to do, prove him God? no: but his doing it proved him sent; and his being sanctified, and sent to that Work, proved him the Son of God, and the Messiah, and that he might have been called God in such a Sense as those to whom the Word came. But if Christ had called himself God, which he never did, and would have been understood in the Trinitarian Sense, it would have been but a Shift, or Equivocation, or at least a weak Assertion of the thing, to say the Scripture calls Men Gods, therefore*
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you must believe me God Almighty. But if the Scripture called Men Gods, and the Sons of the most High, that are Judges, Rulers, or Messengers from God to the People, as were those in *Psal.* 82. as is evident by reading it, much more might Christ in that Sense be called God, and the Son of the Highest, who is the chief and Corner-stone, the Head of the Building, the Messiah, the great Ambassadors or Plenipotentiary from God to Man, and so in God's stead, as *Moses* also was in a lower Order. But the Father alone (who is greater than all) is the God of Gods, who judgeth among the Gods, *Psal.* 82. 1. and where Christ is called Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, 'tis not to be meant without Exception of the Father, but only as over the rest of the Creation, as he is Head of them under God the Father.

Again; those things are said of Christ which can in no Sense be said of God, as that he was a Man, the Son of Man, was born and died (like a Man, like one of the Princes, *Psal.* 82. 7.) was raised again, &c. God is unchangeable, therefore the Son that has undergone so many Changes, and must have more, viz. to come from Heaven, and reign a thousand Years, and then to give up the Kingdom to another, and be subject, cannot be the most high God, *1 Cor.* 15. 27, 28. *אחרי כבודו יתנו*, shall be in a lower Order. Again, as

The Scripture speaketh of God in thousands of Places, as one single Being or Person, we must not contradict so many plain Texts, tho there were some few Places, or Expressions that seem to infer that he is more than one. As for any Names of God that are or seem to be Plurals in Hebrew, as *אלהים* *אלהים* *אלהים* they are either Words took from Idolaters, and continued by the Hebrews in the plural Form, though used as Singulars, as in *Gen.* 1. 1. *ברא* *אלהים* a Verb Singular being joined; and it is not unusual in other Words where Plurality cannot be meant, as *Psal.* 45. 7. Christ is called *אלהים* yet we don't thence argue

more Christs. So *Proverbs* 9. 1. *חכמה* *Wisdom hath builded her House*, or else those Plural Nouns or Verbs that are used of God, are used on the account of Honour or Excellency, as Kings say we, of which we might give divers Examples. But those things cannot with any reason be opposed to the Divine Unity so plainly declared in Scripture; and when God is said to be one, and that there is none besides him, though *Moses*, *Solomon*, *Jerusalem*, *Altars*, *Places*, &c. are called Gods, or by the Names of God, we must not think any of them to be indeed Gods equal with the Father of all things. And though the Trinitarians may curse all those Gods that made not the Heavens and Earth, and therefore don't bless *Moses*, *Solomon*, *Kings* or *Prophets* to whom the Word came, or the Man Christ of the Unitarians, and call them false Gods, they speak inconsiderately, and apply that Scripture wrong; for though *Moses*, Christ, or others that God Almighty calls Gods on some account, did not make the Heavens, and the Earth, they are not to be called false Gods, or cursed, but were truly Gods in such a Sense as God Almighty called them so. The Angels who are commanded to bow down, or honour Christ, are called Gods, I hope not false Ones, *Psal.* 97. 7. Magistrates are called so, *Psal.* 82. 1. and 138. 1. but the false and cursed Gods are the Fictions of Men, called Gods otherwise than they are by those that change the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image like corruptible Man, Birds and Four-footed Beasts, and creeping things, and worship and serve the Creature more than the Creator.

Again; when Worship is said to be given to Christ, it does not follow therefore he is God Almighty, or that the same Worship is to be given to him, as is to be given to the Father; for the Father is greater than he; but only the greatest Love, Esteem, Honour, Obedience, &c. due to a Creature for God's sake, as Men honour an Ambassador for his Master's sake, as representing

sending the King himself. So Christ, *Joh. 5. 23.* There is their degree of Honour or Worship due to our Parents, and all our Betters.

I now come to consider the Matter according to the last Rule I laid down, *viz.*

That we must not interpret any Scripture, or assert any Proposition, so as that thence may be deduced directly, or by plain consequence, any evil Inference, or what is against the Scope and Design of Holy Scripture. All Scripture that is divinely inspired, is profitable for Doctrine, or Teaching, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be furnish'd to every good Work; so that that can be no true Doctrine that doth not tend to good, and yield profitable Uses. The Doctrine of the Trinity by most is confess'd to be undiscoverable without Revelation, and how far soever reveal'd, incomprehensible: but to what purpose God should reveal such a Doctrine, (if it may be suppos'd revealable) or require us to affirm something of him that seems contradictory, or which we don't understand, I cannot conceive. That this Doctrine hath any good use, or influence on the Mind to make it better, or is so necessary to Salvation, I never heard made out: but that it hath many evil Tendencies I shall here shew you; which is a great Argument *a Posteriori*, that it is not true, the Truths of God never naturally influencing to Evil; and if the Trinitarian Doctrine do, thence you may be convinced that you will not well be indifferent whether you be in the right or the wrong in this matter.

The first and great Duty we owe to God (and which is our proper and chief Business) is to love him above all, with all our Heart, all our Soul, and all our Mind; this is the great Command; this is the Sum of the Law, yea, and the Gospel too. Now this Duty cannot be done to God but as to One, or as he is One; we cannot love the Father with

all our Heart, if we love another who is not the Father with equal Love. If the Father is greater than all, he must have the greatest Love. If he be greater than all, he is the Original and Cause of all Being, Power and Goodness; and the Effects must not be esteem'd as the Cause. Whatever is most like God, is next to him most lovely. The Unitarians believe, as we are taught in Scripture, that Christ is the express Image of the Father's Substance, to be loved in the second place as our self. The Doctrine of the Trinity persuades that there are two others equal with the Father, and consequently that must have as much Love, and so dividing makes it impossible to give the highest Affection to any. Likewise is that Honour due to God divided, and two or three are made Sharers, so that there can be none whom we honour most. So most absurd is the common Doxology of the Trinitarians, For Christ's sake, to whom (putting Christ in the first place) with thy Self and Holy Spirit, be all Honour, Glory and Praise. Now if all be given to the Three, it must be divided; but all to each, which the Words import, is impossible, and Nonsense. As inconsiderate is their Wish of the Kingdom to Christ for ever and ever, when the Scripture saith he must once give it up to the Father. Moreover, the Trinitarian Doctrine does not only equal Christ with the Father in all respects, but represents him as exceeding the Father himself in Goodness, Kindness, and Mercy, as if Christ were the principal Mover, and Procurer of our Happiness, and the Father not so ready to forgive, and do us good, but that Christ persuades him; but to what purpose I know not, if he himself be as able and more willing to do for us.

In short, all other Duties we owe to God, as to trust in him as Almighty, to believe him as most True, to obey him as Sovereign of all things, cannot be done but as to one. To have more than one Object of these Acts of Worship, comes to no less than the Breach of the first Commandment.

Again,

Again; the Trinitarian Opinion tends to influence us to dishonour God by having mean or low Thoughts of Him. God is a Being inconceivably high above us, and distant infinitely in Nature and Excellency from us; he is invisible, and dwells in unapproachable Light, and no Eye hath seen him at any time. But if we believe he came from Heaven, from that Invisibilty, was made Flesh, became a Man, and so dwelt among us; was born, a Child of a Woman, lived so many Years on Earth, subject to many of the Infirmities of sinful Men; was killed by wicked Hands, &c. If we believe that he who was seen with mortal Eyes, and handled with sinful Hands, 1 *Joh. 1. 1.* who was like us in all things, Sin only excepted, was God by Nature; Does not this incline us to think God like unto us, and bring down the Most High in our Imaginations, so that we get low, carnal, gross Apprehensions of him, and make us too bold with him? May not these Notions plainly be seen to be the Source and Original of those many irreverent, bold, yea blasphemous things so commonly taught or said of God, as ascribing to him properly things belonging only to Creatures? the talking of God's Suffering, calling the Virgin *Mary* God's Mother, worshipping a bit of Bread as God, bowing to Images, &c. Is not this the Rise of those nonsensical and blasphemous Oaths, such as swearing by God's Blood, Death, Wounds, Sores, Foot, and the like?

On the other side, this Doctrine equally tends to raise us in our own Conceit, inasmuch as it is asserted, that he that was the Son of Man, the Son of *Abraham*, the Son of *David*, the Son of *Mary*, our Brother, was not, or not only the Son of God by an extraordinary Production, viz. without a natural Father, but so by eternal Generation, by natural necessity equal with the Father, such as the Father could not be God without him; and yet he is like us in all things, Sin only excepted. This tends to make Man think himself more like and nigh to the Most

High than indeed he is: we are all too apt to have too low Thoughts of God, and too high of our selves, without being taught such Doctrines.

Another Evil of this Doctrine, that teacheth that Christ is God equal with the Father, is, That it leaves us without that Encouragement we might have to follow his Example, looking on him only as a Man: For if he were God, he could not be tempted to sin, or obey, or suffer, and give us a Pattern of resisting the Allurements to Evil, of Obedience, and choosing Suffering rather than Sin; we can have no hopes or possibility of walking as he walked: but if we look upon him but as a Man, even the Second *Adam*, a Man once more in Innocency, to leave the first *Adam* inexcusable, by shewing that he might have obeyed if he would, tho his Temptation had been greater, and so to convince and bring us to Repentance; if we look upon him as a Man who resisted all that Earth and Hell could do to take away his Innocency, to give us an Example what we ought to do, and must aim at doing, if ever we will be acceptable to God, and happy, we shall be encouraged (as his Disciples ought to do) to deny our selves, take up our Cross, and follow him, whose Example and Precepts are the two chief things whereby the End of his Mission is accomplished.

Another Evil of the Trinitarian Doctrine, is, That as it is taught to be the ground of Religion, and absolutely necessary to Salvation, it lays a heavy Burden on the Consciences of the poor simple zealous Servants of God, being also a Mystery, a Depth unsearchable, incomprehensible, in which scarce three of the greatest Doctors are well agreed. All must believe the Godhead to be Three. How perplex'd may an honest Soul be, lest he should miss and not have the true Notion of this necessary Mystery, when the Teachers cannot help them, and they find so much Scripture contrary or inconsistent with it? There is no way for a thinking conscientious Man to be easy; he that will be at rest (as most indeed do) must for-
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hear to consider it, satisfying himself to say as a Parrot, One God, and three Persons, without ever questioning what is meant by it.

Again; the Doctrine of the Trinity apparently disparages the Scripture to those that suppose it reveal'd therein, as it makes it a Book repugnant to the Understanding God has given us, unsuitable to the Mind of Man, contrary and disagreeing with it self, reflecting hard upon God and Christ, making them speak Contradictions. Nothing is more plainly and frequently asserted there, than that God Almighty is one, and that the Father of Christ is this one God: Christ himself hath told us so, the Prophets and Apostles told us so, *Deut. 6. 4. Job. 8. 54. &c. 17. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 6. Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7, &c.* but notwithstanding these and a thousand Places that assert the Unity of God, that he is the Original and Fountain of all Being; that whatsoever Christ was, did, and had, he received of him, who is greater than he, who had reserved some things in his own Power and Knowledge; notwithstanding Christ so often disclaims the doing his own Will, his own Work, the seeking his own Glory; notwithstanding he so often prays to God, and once for what he seemed to be in some degree ignorant of his Father's Will about, *viz.* the passing of the Cup, notwithstanding he once cry'd out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? yet these perverse Men maintain a Doctrine from some few mistaken Places of Scripture, tho it is evidently contrary and repugnant to so many most plain ones. But I have took notice that when they discourse of this Point, they neglect, or seem unwilling to mention and consider the many plain Places against them: but the Unitarians are frequently examining those Places urged against them, and reconciling them to the rest: As for Example, Where the Trinitarians make a Place speak, as if Christ thought it his natural Right to be equal with God, *Phil. 2. 6.* the reconciling Sense is, he thought of no such Robbery, *etc.* we could not be exhorted to be like minded:

besides, the Form or Image cannot in Nature and Dignity be equal with the thing it is the Image of.

Again; the Trinitarian Opinion, as it is affirm'd to be a necessary Article of Faith, makes the Scripture dark, and an uncomplete Rule of Faith; whereas no unprejudiced Reader, without being first taught this Doctrine otherwise, can possibly find it therein.

Again; this Doctrine as it disparageth Scripture, so it consequently commendeth blind Traditions, even of Antichrist himself. It is well known to the World, that the Protestants generally agree, that the Pope, as the Head of the Roman Apostacy, is the Man of Sin or Antichrist; and it is as well known that the Popes and Church of Rome generally have held, and do hold, the Doctrine of the Trinity and Person of Christ, just as the Protestants do; and they and the Protestants both count these Doctrines as the Fundamentals of their Religion; so that the Protestant Trinitarians agree with Antichrist in Fundamentals. But it is very unlikely that Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, that wicked One, according to the Description of him, *2 Thess. 2.* is such a one as holds the Fundamentals of true Religion, sound and uncorrupted: and if the Popes, and Church of Rome, are found in the Fundamentals of Christian Religion, it will be a hard matter for Protestants to prove them Antichrist. But it is I think more likely that the Pope is Antichrist, and the Church of Rome spiritual Babylon, for this very Cause that they hold this Doctrine of the Trinity, and that the greatest part of Protestants are not wholly come out of the Great City that reigneth over the Rings of the Earth. The Mark of the Great Whore, the Mother of Harlots, or Bawd, is *Mystery*; and the Beast that carried her is full of Names of Blasphemy. Let us a little consider this Man of Sin, and this Whore, this Antichristian Defection: It is a falling away from the plain Truths and Life of the Gospel; to what? to Mysteries, and that of Iniquity, Signs and lying

lying Wonders, believing of Lies. All the Asserters of the Doctrine of the Trinity cry Mystery, Mystery; we must reverently believe these things, tho we do not understand them, they are sacred adorable Mysteries; we must adore those profound things, tho we don't know what they are. This Mysterious Woman, or Church of *Rome*, is drunk with the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus: Who are these Martyrs but such as could not believe some or other of her Mysteries; those that would in any measure use their own Understandings, and worship God as they themselves thought best; those that would not be contented with implicit Faith, and believe as the Church believed, and subject their Understandings to her precious Sons, whose proud Assumption of the Name Orthodox was enough to make them suspected? These Orthodox Teachers when they had at length prevail'd over the old Faith, subdued almost all the West to their mystical Opinions, and ruled them with all deceivableness of Unrighteousness: and it was not so much their care (and 'tis too much so among us now) who lived well or ill, as who were Orthodox, that is, consented to all the blind Opinions these Men were pleas'd to put upon them. The Church of *Rome* from the first falling away, hath always most violently persecuted those that would not believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, or its Branches, as the Real Presence, Transubstantiation, the Conveniency and Necessity of worshipping Wafers and Images, and believing as the Church believes.

Again; Antichrist is said to sit in the Temple of God (that is, the Church that should be so) as God, or shewing himself that he is God. The Pope of *Rome* asserts Christ to be God Almighty, God by Nature, whom the Scripture declares as God's Ambassador, or Vicar: from which he raiseth Christ into the Throne of God Almighty himself. And as he raiseth Christ from the right Hand of God into his very Throne; so he raiseth himself from being a Bishop of a Church at *Rome*, (equall'd by any

other Bishop) to be Christ's Vicar; that is, according to the Trinitarian Doctrine, God Almighty's Vicar, or as God, that is, just in the true place of Christ; and so he is properly call'd Antichrist, as he is a false Christ, got into the true Christ's place, where he exerciseth the Power that is only Christ's, by the Gift of God, as to forgive Sins, make Laws and Ordinances in the Church, &c. and where he upholdeth his Credit by lying Wonders, such as Transubstantiation, or Consubstantiation, with the Tricks and Juggles to perswade them. O that ever there should be such strong Delusion! as that any should believe that a Priest, a vile Fellow, by saying *Hoc est Panis*, or *hoc est Corpus*, over a bit of Bread, should transmute it into the Body of Christ, tho none can see the mysterious Change; and that then this supposed transmuted Water must be worshipped as their Maker, God Almighty; and then that vile Men should be of such unspeakable Power and Cruelty, as to eat him when they had done. Here's mystical Work for you. This came to pass because they received not the Love of the Truth that they might be saved, viz. that God is one, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is a Spirit, and to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth, and Christ truly his anointed Messenger.

Again; Christ came to destroy the Works of the Devil, and he will come again to destroy Antichrist with the Spirit of his Mouth, and the Brightness of his Coming, his Word, and the clear Manifestation of it, and of himself. What was the grand Work of the Devil but to set up the Worship of more Gods, as he did among the Pagans? Antichristianism is but a returning to, or restoring again a sort of refined Paganism. The Dragon gave Power to the first Beast, and when the second Beast cometh up, he exerciseth the Power of the first Beast; and tho he had Horns like a Lamb, he spake as the Dragon, and commanded to make an Image of the first Beast, and had Power to give Life unto that Image, and to cause

that as many as would not worship the Image should be killed, viz. those that would not join in this refined Paganism, and worship, if not 30000, yet three Gods, and as many Wafers, Images, Crosses, Relicks, and Saints, &c. as will more than 30 times make up that Number. But let but one God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be worshipped, who is an invisible Spirit or Mind, in Spirit and in Truth, and all the Paganism of the Popes, and all the Popery of the Protestants will fall together, which God grant quickly.

Then that implicit, enfolded, confused Faith, which is counted so necessary not only in the Church of *Rome*, but among all the Protestant Trinitarians, will be no longer implicit, but the necessary Faith will be *ἐκείνη*, *Heb. 11. 1.* a Conviction, or convictive Argument. Let us a little farther consider the Evil of maintaining an implicit Faith, or Faith of Mysteries, as necessary to Salvation, of which a sort of cunning designing Men are the Teachers and Expounders. I would say Confounders. If a thing be once thought to be necessary to Salvation, especially if it be an easy thing, how ready will People be to embrace it, all would be saved, (at least from the unpleasing Fruits of Sin) the Faith in the Doctrine of the Trinity, or any other enfolded Faith is so much the easier to be had, as there is the less Pains took to consider it: to take it upon trust, without ever examining it, is the readiest way to have a firm Belief, and be Orthodox; hereby Negligence and Sloth are indulged, which People love. But why should our Teachers so mightily urge such Doctrines?

After I had read the Histories of the Persecutions from the Church of *Rome*, I long studied ere I could find out the Cause why the Belief of Transubstantiation (a Branch of the Doctrine that Christ is God) was the principal Test, and that for which those that could not blindly or falsely assert it, were most vigorously and cruelly persecuted; why that most absurd Point was the chief thing

so long required to make a true Believer and Son of the Church: but at length I found it, viz. that being the most unreasonable and absurd thing could be invented, those that once believed that, might believe any thing the Clergy, as they call'd themselves, (but in truth a pack of *Knaves*) should impose upon them; and that thereby they might rule them, and get their Temporals for feeding them with their pretended Spirituals, their Mysteries. Profit and Honour was the Design of these Masters of Mysteries, by these they got to that exceeding height of Pride and Riches in former Days, and so exalted themselves above the People, even to be esteem'd God-makers, and to be exempt from being under civil Jurisdiction, to live at Ease without Labour, &c. And the same lording it over the People, who are the true Clergy or Heritage, *1 Pet. 5. 3.* (the word is *κλήρο*) is still too much amongst us, and Mysteries are still necessary to uphold the Credit of those who love the Profit of dispensing them. Now these Men who have the Honour and Profit of being the Masters and Teachers of these deep mystical things, when they have met with those who could see through the Deceit, and were able by rational Ways to oppose and detect them, and they found themselves not so well furnished with spiritual Weapons to defend their bad Cause, they have still been running to carnal ones, their Pride would not suffer them to acknowledge their Errors, and be convinced, and their Covetousness makes them dread the Issue of such Conviction: So having not Scripture, the Sword of the Spirit, sufficient on their side, they make use of the Sword of the Magistrate, (the Sword of *St. Paul* is more useful than the Keys of *St. Peter*) they get Laws enacted against their Opponents, get Kings and Parliaments on their side to imprison, hang, or burn those they can't confute, or at least to burn and forbid their Books and Sermons. But for my part I should presently suspect that Church, and her Doctrine, if I knew it not,

and

and had no other Reason, that should get a Law made, that all People must say and do as the teacheth, and I would be a Dissenter from her. A Religion establish'd by Human Laws seems to want a better Foundation, or be weak in some things: For the Truths of the Gospel need not be established by Human Law, being built upon the Rock against which the Gates of Hell cannot prevail. There is as little need to have a Law made, that we should believe the Sun shines, which when we once see it, we cannot but presently believe it.

And as these Men use these unreasonable Methods against those that can see as well, or better than themselves; so to keep the People, their Clients, still from seeing, they throw Hell-fire in their Faces, and cry out, Damnable Heresy! Have a care of such Persons and Books, as you tender your Salvation; threaten *Anathema-maranathas*, and eternal Destruction to all those that don't believe as they believe; so that the poor honest deceived People dare not so much as question what they teach: But blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they cannot make us so sensibly feel these Thunders, as they did formerly.

I will not say that all those that preach up the Doctrine of the Trinity are conscious, and guilty of these evil Ways; many of them I believe are innocently under the Deception of their Fore-fathers, and lie ignorantly under the inveterate Bondage of Tradition, and think they do well; but they also have the Profit and Esteem that comes by teaching of their Mysteries, which is sweet, and blinds the Eyes.

I know no Church in *England*, that if their Preacher should plainly preach up the true Knowledge and Worship of but one God, would suffer him, but he would go nigh to lose his Benefice; so much has the corrupt Tradition of the Church of *Rome* riveted the Custom of worshipping more Gods in the Minds, even of the Protestant People. Nor I believe, should a private Member in any Church openly profess the Belief and Wor-

ship of but one God, would he fail of being excommunicated; or should a whole Church once be perswaded to worship no more, would they readily hire a Man to teach them Mysteries to the contrary.

Again; the Doctrine of a Trinity in God, and Christ being one of the three, does not only dishonour the Father, who is greater than the Son, by asserting the Son as great as he, but dishonoureth Christ himself also. The Trinitarians perswade themselves that we dishonour, yea and deny Christ, the Lord that bought us, (we thank them, they acknowledg he bought us) but let us reason upon the Matter, or (if we may not use the odious word *Reason*) discourse the Point. They dishonour Christ by contradicting his Words, where he saith, *The Father is greater than He*, yea than all; that he doth nothing of himself, but hath received all Power from the Father; that the Father is the only true God, and (by his Apostle) that he shall once give up the Kingdom to the Father, and the Son himself be subject to him, that God may be all in all. No, say they, Thou art co-equal, co-eternal with the Father; and there is another so too, even the Spirit, whom thou sendest, co-equal and co-eternal with you both: Thou art equally Almighty, and hast all Power essentially in thy self; the Father is not the only true God, thou art God as much as he, over all, blessed for ever-more. Just as *Peter* answered him as to his Sufferings; *Master, these things shall not befall thee*: So they make his Words contradictory and false, make him a false Witness. Where he saith, *I and the Father are one*, the Trinitarians so expound it as to make it contrary and inconsistent with his saying, *The Father is greater than I*, and greater than all, and with his Desire that the Saints may be one, as he and his Father are one. Christ declares himself to be the Messiah, the Anointed, the Sent of God, the Mediator between God and Sinners, the Messenger of the Covenant: But the Trinitarians say he is God himself, which makes it impossible he should be
sent.

sent of any one, be the Christ, the Anointed, or the Mediator between God and Sinners. So when they speak of many of the great things Christ hath done, and is, they say, he is, and does them as he is God, that is, as he was not Christ, or the Mediator, destroying his Offices, and making him no Christ: so that with them the Son of Man (call'd the Son of God, because conceived by his Almighty Power in the Virgin) is little more than an empty Name. And as they account him and the Holy Ghost each of them God, and give them Offices, they do most absurdly and presumptuously, in their Sense, attribute Offices to God Almighty, not considering that to have an Office, is a Note of Subjection and Service incompatible with the Divine Being. Now the Unitarians believe all that is spoken of Christ is spoken of him as Man, as he was Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God by Signs and Wonders God wrought by him, like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted; and believe that God has raised him, and exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, of things in Heaven and Earth, either Angels or Men; and that he is the Head, the beginning of the Creation of God, the first-born of every Creature.

Consider, dear Sir, how can you think Christ is honoured or pleased with Mens striving to honour him with Lies, with saying he is what he is not, tho' it be greater than he is? You might as well deny the History of him, because you believe he is God over all, and say he did not indeed die; yea you do in effect say so, what say he is God; for God cannot die. But you say he was God and Man in one Person, and make him half God half Man, too like the *Semidei* of the Pagans, and so confound God and the Creature, which you should have a care of. The making God and the Creature essentially one, was the ground of all *Spinoza's* Atheism, Absurdities, and Impieties, who was perhaps the greatest Atheist that ever was.

Do you think an Ambassador would think himself honour'd, nay would he not think

himself mocked by any that should give him the Titles of his Master that sent him, and tell him that he is as great, or King himself, notwithstanding he declares his Message from his Prince? So is it in this Matter: Do you not think Christ was the greatest Honourer, Worshipper and Lover of God his Father? and can you think he is pleased that you rob his Father of his Honour? No certainly, he is more honour'd and pleas'd by being believed as the Sent of God, as he was, than by being said to be God Almighty, the Sender himself, as he was not.

Another Evil of the Doctrine of the Trinity, is the grieving the Spirits of those that believe there is but one God, those little ones in Knowledge, that cannot apprehend any thing contrary to this plain Truth. Those that truly honour God the Father as the most High God, and Christ as his Son, cannot but be much grieved and offended, to hear the Trinitarians vent such dishonourable things of God Almighty, such untrue things of Christ his Son, such Absurdities and Contradictions, to see the Plainness of the Gospel so perverted, and to see the poor inconsidering People drink down all they say, as Fishes do Water, and swim easily in it. Nay, is it not a Cause of Lamentation to hear (as I have done) a plain honest Man venting Lies in the Name of the Lord, which might easily be seen by his Words being contradictory, the People also believing him as sent of God, and neither Teacher nor Hearer willing to give an Ear to sound Instruction?

Again; the Trinitarian Doctrine, with all its Branches, disparageth Christianity in general, inasmuch as it represents it grounded on Doctrines not suitable to the Understanding and Capacities God has given Mankind, making them deny their most plain and certain Notions. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three distinct, and yet not three, but one and the same, is to say, and then unsay presently what is said. Would any Heathen that had heard nothing of these things, that should hear the Trinitarians

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discourse of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that each of them is God, apprehend any otherwise than that they were three Gods? But then to hear them contradict this, and say, no, they are but one, would not he think these Men want common Sense, or know not what they say? The Heathens never asserted such Contradictions, that their Gods were many, and yet but one. What Turk or Jew is likely to be converted while such things are taught (so disagreeing with their undoubted Notion of one God) as the Fundamentals of Christianity? This caused the Turks and Tartars to embrace the Doctrine of *Mahomet*, as the more probable Opinion, because *Mahomet* asserted that most apparent Notion of one God. And is it not this that hinders them and the Jews to this Day from embracing Christianity? What Account will the Trinitarians give to God one Day, for casting this Stumbling-block in the way of so many Nations? Are not their absurd Doctrines, with their disagreeing Lives, that which keeps all the World from being converted? while they are much more busy in finding and maintaining little Subtleties in the Gospel, than in keeping its pure, plain and weighty Precepts.

Neither is the Trinitarian Doctrine free, I believe, from influencing some among us call'd Deists, to discredit all reveal'd Religion, seeing the Absurdities and Contradictions of it. And Deism indeed I take to be a smaller Error than Polytheism or Tritheism, for the worshipping more Gods is not only worshipping Fictions of our own, but it is a sort of Atheism, or denying of God, or of this Truth, that God is the most perfect Being. And an ingenious Person once told me, that the Doctrine of the Trinity was that which for some time most tempted him to Atheism. I have a mind to do one thing more before I make an end, (instead of many I might say) and that is, to compare the Trinitarian and Unitarian Doctrines, supposing one or the other an Error, so as to see on which hand it will be safest to err, or

which will be the greatest Error. If a Unitarian can be found to err, it is only in this, in not worshipping the most high God under some Names or Notions he thinks do not belong to him; he worships God under the Name of Father, (whom Trinitarians don't deny to be God) but not under the Notion or Name of Son, Anointed, or Mediator, &c. thinking these are no Names, Attributes, or Properties of the most High Being: If this be an Error, and those Names do belong to God, where is the Greatness or Damnableness of the Sin? If we acknowledge in God, under the Name of Father, all conceivable Perfections, where is the Heinousness and Danger? God was not known to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, by his Name *Jehovah*, yet they worshipped the true God in Spirit and in Truth.

But if the Trinitarians err (as I think I have sufficiently proved) and Christ, the Anointed, the Begotten of God, the Son of God, are Names of a Creature, what do they (as they themselves must needs, and some do, grant) less than worship a Creature, as and with the Creator; and so break the first and great Commandment, *Thou shalt have no other Gods besides me*? Which whether it be a great and dangerous Error, Sir, I think it your Concern now to consider, and examine the Matter, (if you be still a Trinitarian) if you have Truth on your side, it will be but the clearer by being tried; if not, neither need you fear finding it otherwise: It is better to find ones self in a Mistake, (no matter how soon) than to go on erring still. I my self was bred up, and instructed in the Trinitarian Doctrine, and believed it without any Difficulty, while I did not consider it, but took it upon trust, (as you and all Trinitarians for these many last Ages have done) and for a long time retain'd it as an unquestionable Truth, because I did not question it, till by the more careful reading the Scripture, and some Trinitarian Writings, (having never convers'd with any Unitarians or their Books) I found I was self in a Mistake, and was forced to im-

brace the Unitarian Doctrine I now contend for. Which tho I now firmly believe, I continue patiently to receive, and weigh all the Objections that any body, yea my self, can suggest. Nor do I positively promise or pray (as Trinitarians are used to do) that my present measure of Light shall or may be the same still; but am always ready and willing to have things still made out more clearly to me; thinking that as my Obedience to the Commands of God ought to be more and more exact, the longer I live; and if not, it is a very bad Sign; so my Knowledge, the older I grow, ought to be the greater and more perfect. Tho as to these Propositions, that there is but one supreme Person, Being, or God, and that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is this God; and that Jesus Christ his Son is not God equal in Power, Majesty, or any Perfection, with his Father, but a Man like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted; whom God hath raised, and given a Name above every Name in Heaven and in Earth, the Giver only excepted; I see no Likelihood that I shall ever alter my Mind, it being the Faith of my

maturer and most serious Consideration. Nor did I ever hear of any that once thought they had Reason to leave the Trinitarian Opinion, and embraced the Unitarian, that did ever recant, but continued therein satisfied as their last and ripest Judgment; whilst it is no new thing for a Trinitarian some time or other to confess himself mistaken in the Opinion of his Childhood and Prejudice, the greatest part of the Unitarians of these later Ages having first, for some time, been carried along with the Stream in the Trinitarian Mists or Mysteries, and Darkeness. And tho I confess my self very confident in my present Faith in this Matter, yet I am far from rashly censuring the Trinitarians as to their future State, or threatening what their Opinion will one Day cost them, or how Christ will force them to recant, as I have commonly been threatned by them, but desire to carry my self (as most Unitarians I am acquainted with do) with all Love, Tendernefs, and Modesty, rather thinking the best than the worst of every Man.

F I N I S.

